World Development Report

†538. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the World Development Report in which agriculture sector has been cited as the best medium for poverty alleviation;

(b) if so, whether Government has studied the said reference of the report;

(c) if so, the decision taken by Government in this regard; and

(d) whether Government would decide to bring about reformative changes in irrigation system to give the development of agriculture sector a priority?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The Government of India is aware of the fact that Agriculture is the mainstay of the Indian Economy, as it constitutes the backbone of the rural livelihood security system. Rapid growth of agriculture is essential not only to achieve household food security but also to bring about enquity through distribution of income and wealth resulting in rapid reduction in poverty levels.

In order to revitalize agriculture sector, and accelerate the pace of development, Government of India have recently announced two new Schemes namely, National Food Security Mission to ensure adequate availability of foodgrains in the country and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna, to incentivise the states to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sectors with flexibility for the states in planning and implementing the schemes. National Rainfed Area Authority, National Bamboo Mission and National Fisheries Development Board have been established to facilitate development of agriculture and allied sectors.

Besides, a number of Plan Schemes/programmes are being implemented which, *inter-alia*, include revitalization of the agricultural extension services, agricultural marketing reforms, horticulture development, Micro Irrigation Scheme to encourage efficient utilization and management of irrigation water, Macro Management scheme, including National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas, revitalization of cooperative sector and provision of adequate credit.

Improving the marketing avenues for farmers

539. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that several private companies have been refused the permission to make direct purchases from the farmers in Maharashtra;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government in several States has refused permission to intending electronics spot exchanges to register as Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee;

(c) if so, whether such refusal is consistent with the Model Act proposed by Government; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) whether Government would take corrective action to improve the marketing avenues for the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Question does not arise.

Organic farming

540. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is taking some steps to develop organic farming in different States;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of cultivated area in different States under organic farming till 2007-08?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government is implementing a Central Sector Scheme, National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF) for production, promotion, certification and market development of organic farming in the country, wherein financial assistance is being provided for the capacity building through service providers, setting up of organic input production units of fruits/vegetables waste compost, bio-fertilizers and Vermiculture hatcheries, promotion of organic farming through training programme, field demonstration, setting up of model organic farms and market development.

Government is also implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on National Horticulture Mission (NHM) in the country from 2005-06 under which promotion of organic farming has been included as one of the components and financial assistance is being provided for organic cultivation of horticultural crops, setting up of vermi compost units and for organic farming certification.

In addition, Agriculture and processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce and Industry is promoting export of organic products and implementing National programme for Organic Production (NPOF). Under the Scheme financial assistance is being provided to its registered exporters for Market Development, Infrastructure Development, Quality Development, R&D and transport assistance.

(c) The total certified area under organic farming in the country is 3.12 lakh hectares. The State-wise area is given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

State-wise Certified area under organic farming in the country

Sl. No.	State	Certified Area (Hectares)
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	5561.17
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	65.87
3.	Assam	2526.61